

THE
PRISONERS
PLAINT,

A SERMON PREACHED BY
GVALTER ASHTON, Master of Arts,
Prisoner in the Kings Bench for Debt,
before the Imprisoned and others
in that p'ace, vpon the 25. of
August. 1622.

I. SAM. 2. 6, 7.

*The Lord killeth, and maketh aliuē, bringeth downe to the
graue, and raiseth vp.
The Lord maketh poore and maketh rich, bringeth low, and
exalteth.*

LONDON,
Printed by Augustine Mathewes.
1623.

THE
PRISONERS
RE-CLAIM

A SERMON PREACHED BY



The Sermon was preached at the
Prison, on the 1st of May, 1823.
By the Rev. Mr. [Name obscured]

LONDON,
Printed by [Name obscured] 1823.



TO THE COVRTEOVS
READER.



Hristian READER, this Sermon was preached for the comfort of the Impri-soned, and now Printed as a Card and Polestar for thy direction, when the same Lot shall fall into thy Lap; expect not in it Philareta verba, pickt words, or matter of transcendent consequence; Onely Items to sustaine thee, when the Lord shall hedge vp thy way, and compasse thee about with Gall and Wormwood. I freely acknowledge, that when I first thought vpon this Text, it was not in my thoughts to expose his Context to publique view, for I know my Infirmities, and my Countrey my grievances, which haue well nigh made a diuorce

Lament. 3.

TO THE READER.

*betwixt me and my Studies. The Authors
ayme is to encrease thy patience, against thou
come to mourne in Davids Deepes. The
winde may change, though it long haue kept
his quarter; and he that stands may fall, al-
though most watchfull. Reade, traduce not,
shauings may haue their weight, so well
as greater Wedges. Thus referring these
Lines to thy perusall, and Thee to thy Ma-
ker, I rest*

*From my distracted studies
in the Kings Bench,
Jan. 26. Anno 1622.*

Thine in the Lord,

GVALTER ASHTON.



TO THE CVRIOVS
READER.



Hough others haue trodden
this Tract, and discust these
words, yet it is Saint Pauls
Rule, *ὅτι ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ νοὶ καθ' ἑαυτοῦ κρίνεται*,
That euerie man should abound in
his owne Sense.

Thine,

G. A.

THE PREFACE.



When the people of God were captivated by the Babylonians, they requested them to sing some of the Songs of Sion: to which they answered, How can wee sing the Lords Song, being in a strange land, and full of heavinesse? Psal. 127. 3. 4. *Matato nomine de me narretur historia: change but the name, and the case is mine owne; They captivated, I imprisoned; they suited to sing some of Sions Notes and Ditties, I requested (not to sing I must confesse) but to say, to speake some word of Exhortation; They answered, How can we sing the Lords Song being in a strange land, and full of heavinesse? I might haue replyed, How can a man Preach in a strange place, a house of mourning? But calling to minde, that Saint Paul, and Syllas, when they were confined, did not intermit to pray and praise the name of the Lord their God, Acts 16. v. 25. Hence haue I resolved to make their Patterne my Practise, and at this time to undertake this dayes Taske.*

THE



THE PRISONERS PLAINT.

PSAL. 130. VER. I.

*Out of the Deepe places haue I called to thee
O Lord, &c.*



He Text is one of *Dauids* Petitions, when he was in his *Profunditatibus*, as *Iunius*, and *Tremellius* read the words, *in the depth of deepes*, distressed in body, distracted in soule, persecuted in person, wounded in spirit. Distracted, wounded both in soule and conscience, with the feare of Gods wrath for his sinnes committed, which many times euen in this life, breakes forth into due strokes of vengeance, against all such as trade in sinne, and goe on in the workes of their owne inuention: yet herein the Prophet *David* bewraies a wonderfull measure of faith, in gi-
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The Prisoners plaint.

uing the Lord no rest, nor himselfe any ease; but prefers Petition after Petition, request vpon request, and still is not satisfied, like an importunate Suitor, vntill the eares of his God be possesst with the voyce of his complaint; and hee in mercy haue obtained the desires of his heart; which is not vsball with many in their daies of triall, and houre of temptations, who are so farre from wrestling with God by deuout supplications for deliuerance, that they either fall off, from their affiance and trust in God, or else faint vnder the weight of the Crosse, thinking that God hath forgotten to be gracious, and that hee will be no more intreated, if one poore *liberatus Domine*, doe not produce the effect of their longing and languishing desires; which is to bee marked, as a direction for vs the imprisoned, that seeing *the Lord hath written bitter things against vs*, and hemb'd vs in on euery side, with wants, oppressions, reproches, and the like, therefore wee should not suffer our eyes to sleepe, nor the lids thereof to slumber, vntill wee haue made our peace with God, by true conuersion and godly sorrow, for all those sinnes, which haue brought vpon vs this bondage and immuerement; which being done, the Lord hee cannot but grant vs his gracious *liberate*, I meane discharge from this house of Teares, the common

mon Inne of all the Oppressed.

The *Epigraphe* or Title of my Text, with the rest of the context, is a Song of Degrees, and so called as *Arius Montanus* giues the reason, because the Priests and the Leuites (as they ascended from that place of the Temple, which was called the great Court into a higher roome, named the inner Court of the house of the Lord) did at solemne feast daies, sing this *Psalme*, with others of the like *Inscription*, vpon euery staire once; Teaching vs, as in a *Ceremony*, that all those who serue God, must doe it with lifted vp hearts, and spirituall affections, according as wee are called vpon, with the words of *Sursum corda*, in the suffrages of our Church *L. burgie*, and English seruice Booke.

Others be of another minde as *Apulinaris* in his *Metaphrasis*, who saith, that because the voice was more lifted vp, and strained in the singing of this *Psalme*, then it was in others, hence had it this denomination of *A Song of Degrees*.

Well, to passe by coniectures, our later expositors as *Iunius* and the rest, thinketh that nothing is meant, but that a certaine excellency lies hid in this *Psalme* aboue the rest, as being a choise and heauenly *Epigrame*, and therefore called a *Song of Degrees*, as the *Canticles* a Song of Songs; The ten Comman-

dements, a *Doctrine of Doctrines*, the Creed, a *History of Histories*; the Lords prayer a *Prayer of Prayers*, onely to shew the *eminency* and *excellency* thereof.

To conclude then, we are not to be too inquisitiue and curious, in searching out the reason of each particular, *sed quædam ignorare, non tantum est boni Christiani, sed etiam & docti Theologi*: not onely a good Christian, but a learned Diuine may (without disparagement to his profession bee ignorant of some things.

In the *Text* these parts be remarkeable.

1. *The party Suinting.*
2. *The party suited.*
3. *The subiect or matter of the suite.*
4. *The manner thereof, with the condition of the time.*

Lastly, the (*Vbi*) or the place where the Prophet David was, when hee does thus plant and supplicate.

The party suinting, is exprest in the vowel *I*. being *David* by name.

The party suited, is the *Lord*, and more pathetically, *O Lord*.

The matter of his suite, is for *Audience*, or that the *Lord* would heare his voyce. *Lord heare my voyce.*

The manner of his suite, is exprest in the word (*called*) or as some translate it, *cried; I haue*

haue cried; to note *Dauids* feruency, and earnestnesse in this his suite, together with the *Condition of time* exprest in the word (*haue*) which being a note of the *Preterperfect tense*, argues his continued and constant suite, as the learned well obserue vpon this place.

Lastly the *Vbi*, or the place where the Prophet *David* was, when he thus called and cried; and that is in *Profundis*, in the deepe places: vnder the name whereof the Prophet *David*, Sanctified *Jeremie*, and other the Pen men of the Holy Scriptures doe by a *Tropicall*, or a borrowed kinde of speech, signifie great afflictions and distresses; which often are resembled to deepe waters, and so is the phrase taken in the 69. *Psalm. vers. 2.* as also in the 124. *Psalm. 4.* And the Iewes hauing vpon them the perfection of misery, finde not how to expresse their wofull condition, but by this kinde and propriety of speech. *Lament. 3. 54.*

Moreouer, this phrase is vsed in the same sence among heathen writers, as *Aeneas* escaping the danger of warre, and other manifold troubles, is said to bee delivered from the Deluge, or ouer-flowing of waters, as *Virgil* hath it in the 7. of his *Aeneads*, *Diluuio ex illo tot vasta per aquora vectus.* And *Pindar*, writing of a great Battell, betweene

the *Persians*, and the *Grecians* calls it πολυφθeros
 Νος θυβρος: The destroying shower of *Iupiter*;
 and this seemes to be the reason of this Trans-
 lation, because distresses holde a certaine
 Analogie, or correspondencie with waters,
 and that in diuers respects, according to the
 properties of water.

First, other dangers assault the body but in
 one part, either shouldering, or siding, or af-
 fronting vs; but water in respect of his liquid
 nature, in a moment of time, doeth enclose vs
 in on all sides, leauing vs no ordinary meanes
 of escape; So I appeale to the experience of
 vsall, who can witnesse that we neuer haue
 been ouertaken with one only trouble alone,
 but vpon the instant a second, or a third cala-
 mitie, like *Iobs Messengers*, hath come posting
 one in the necke of another vpon vs, & sicut
 vnda, vndam trudit; and as euery waue shoues
 forward his fellow, so the ending of one mi-
 sery, is but the beginning of another.

Secondly, water hath a swallowing & stife-
 ling qualitie, witnes the people that perished
 in the riuer *Kison*, and the riuer *Kison* swept
 them away, *Iudg. 5. 21.* as also the forefathers
 of the *Egyptians*, who tooke a surfet of the
Red Sea, and gaue vp the ghost: So afflicti-
 ons they drowne our spirituall enemies, our
 vices, our vanities; and while we be vnder the
 Crosse, our sinnes they become sicke, and
 languish

languish in vs, and wee in some measure eased from the tyrannie and commanding power therof, *He that suffers in the flesh, ceaseth from sinne, 1. Pet. 4. 1.*

Lastly, as water is an allay, for the tempering of our strong and fuming Wines; so tribulations they moderate our earthly pleasures, least we should be drunke with the delights thereof, and grow exorbitant, *extra orbem*, exceeding the listes of Sobriety and Temperance; and as wine will soone infatuate and besot the braine, if it bee not mixt with his quantitie of water: so our pleasures and prosperitie, our wealth and wit, will soone turne to our owne decay, if we be not put in minde to recollect our selues, to walke wisely and discreetly in the vse thereof, by some diuine whip, some nip, some scourge.

But to returne to the mentioned poynts: and first of the first, as namely of the particsuiting, which is *Dauid* by name, implied in the vowell *I*. A man highly in the fauour of God, nay, Gods fauourite, as I may so tearme him, his aduancement will testifie no lesse: from a Shepheard he is raised to bee a King; from a Subiect, to a Soueraigne; yet this glorious bud is blasted, his honour is eclipsed, and his pompe inueloped in the greatnesse of distresse, he is *totus in Profundis*, deepe in the share of misery.

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The Conclusion is obuious, that God out of his vnsearchable wisedome, doeth often plunge his dearest and nearest children in extreame miseries and calamities; in miseries which attend their persons, as wants, oppressions, reproaches, and the like; in miseries which attend their Soules, as fits of despaire, spirituall desertion, doubting of their saluation: so that if they had not hope of another life after this, they were of all Creatures most miserable, as Saint *Paul* concludes; discoursing of the same subiect, in the *1. Cor. 15. 19.*

The Sonne of the morning, *CRIST IESVS*, the brightnesse of his Father, *Qui licet intrauit mundum sine peccato, tamen non exiuit sine flagello*, who although he was spotlesse and without exception, yet was hee spotted with the spittle of the Iewes, disgraced, contemned, tormented, and lastly, put to death, and hauing thus suffered, *hee is entred into glory, Luke 24. 26.* and wee his members must tread in the same steps, not expecting heere in this valley of teares, *Halcionis dies agere*, to liue a life of delicacie or delight, for neuer haue any of Gods Saints enioyed such a *Priniledge* or libertie. Come wee to great *Eliab*, whose tongue was *χάλινος ἵσαν*, the bridle of heauen, in regard that by his prayers he could binde or loose, the influence of the
hea-

heauens, procure raine, or make a stayall thereof; yet this great Saint hath his diuident in the Crosse, hee is persecuted by *Iezabel*, becomes a man of sorrowes, and bewayles himselfe, sitting vnder a Iuniper tree, 1. *Kings* 19.

4. Come wee to *Iohn Baptist*, the second *Eliab*, who was *Eliab* in spirit, though not in person, and behold (*his*) sufferings, which be no lesse then the losse of his blood, the losse of his head; which being cut off, it's made a recompence for a dauncing, vaulting Damsell, and a satisfaction for an incestuous bloody minded mother. Who more beloued of God, then *Lazarus* the beggar? for being dead, he is attended of Angels, and placed in *Abrahams* bosome, *Luke* 16.22. so that wee may remember him, with *Lazarus non est mortuus, sed miseria mortua est*, *Lazarus* is not dead, his misery onely is dead and buried: And yet who more miserable then *Lazarus* while he liued? who more beggarly? who more pincht with famine, and cleanness of teeth? not obtaining a few crummes for his reliefe, at the rich gluttons doore, nor any mercy saue of his dogges onely, that licked his sores. Whereby it appeares how the estate of Gods children, hath beene alwayes full of woes, and wants; the temptation whereof hath almost shaken the faith of the strongest Saints: for the Prophet *Ieremie*,

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though sanctified from the wombe, complains that hee cannot sound the depth of this Iudgement, *Jer. 2. 1. 2.* and illuminate *Dauid*, from the 2. of the 73. *Psalme*. vnto the 13. doth acknowledge that he could not obtaine; the vnderstanding of this so deepe a mysterie, *scilicet*, why the Lord should thus clap vp his children in the houses of correction, and giue vnto the wicked Countries of liberty, and Kingdomes of treasure; in so much that the eye of flesh and reason would seeme to conclude, that they are the onely happy men, and the Lords beloued; and that others who be afflicted, how they be reiecte and casheered of him. And although no man is able to diue into the depth of Gods counsell, nor yet to clime vp into heauen to search the cause, why God should thus afflict those, whom hee doth affect; yet I will propound some arguments, such as humane frailty will affoord, both to manifest Gods wisdom and Iustice, in thus correcting and humbling vs, as also to prevent our repynning and murmuring against him for the same.

First the cause is in man, that brings God thus vpon his backe to scourge him, and that is his sinne, man suffers for sinne, *Lamen. 3. 4.* and there being in each man *πίλος ἀδαμῆ* the Sullage of *Adams* clay, and the reliques of sinne,

sinne, which are encreased by our dayly vn-
cleannesse, and actuall offences, therefore that
wee may reforme our selues, and that others
may take vs for an example, God doth wash
the best of the sonnes of men, in the bitter
waters of *Marah*, in the sea of affliction. *Ma-*
nassés, Dand, Iosias, haue drunke deepe of this
tart cuppe, there being no exemption with
him from punishment if men take liberty for
to sinne. *Sed quicumque stultus est in culpa,*
sapiens erit in pena, whosoever will iest with
sinne, may in time grow wise when he comes
to smart for his folly; therefore the Pro-
phet *Micha* doth confesse in the 7. of his
Prophecy, *vers. 9. That he will beare the wrath*
of the Lord, because hee had sinned against him;
and this *wrath* of the Lord towards his
Saints, is not like the sword of a Iudge pre-
pared for destruction, but rather the rod of
father ordained for correction. *μαρτυροῦντα*
saith the Apostle *ἵνα μὴ καταισχυνθῶμεν* wee are
chastned of the Lord, that we should not bee
condemned with the world. *Corthin. Epist. 1.*

11. 32.

The next cause is in the *Denill*, whose malice
is boundlesse toward mankinde, who like a
common Informer cannot endure to bee out
of practise, but must bee alwaies nibbling at
our heeles, slaundering and accusing of vs vn-
to God, that hee may get a Commission to

2

meddle with vs, as hee did with the holy man *Iob*, and to persecute vs, as hee doth the woman in the wilderness, *Reu. 12. 1.* and therefore no maruell if that wee be afflicted, distressed, and lodged in a Labyrinth of miseries, hauing such a vigilant aduerary, who is fit at euery turne, to giue vs the grand lash and to ierck vs for each slip, if the Lord chiefe Iustice of heauen and earth, will say but *Amen* to his wishes and desires.

3

Thirldly, the Lord doth this plunge vs, to awake vs out of the dead sleepe of sinne, and to open our eyes, that wee may see our naturall wretchednesse and nakednesse, in respect of Grace and Purity, which hauing once espied, it should make vs, runne to God to petition him, that wee may share in that long white Robe, the rightuousnesse of his Sonne, the Ornament and covering of all his Saints. *Aristotle* tels vs in the 3. of his *Meteorologicks*, that, *Omne animal, fulmine percussum, vertit faciem ad fulmen*. Euery creature, strucke with a Thunderbolt, presently affronts it. Beloued these that haue not an care to heare God, when hee calls for amendment of life, saying, *Returne, O Shulamite, returne, returne. Cant. 6. 13. 1.* For those the Lord hath a smiting hand, with the which he will either awake them, if they doe belong vnto him, or breake them in peeces like a Pot-
ters

ters vessell. The Horse, that hee may spring forwards in his pace, must bee remembered eyther with Spurre or Switch; The sluggish or carnall Christian, following his voyage and pilgrimage vnto heauen, *Necesse est prematur, vt ad Deum ire compelletur*, saith Saint *Gregorie*, hee must beelashit with the rodde of affliction, that so hee may learne to hasten to the happinesse of all the glorified Saints. This is prefigured in *Ioab*, in the second of *Samuel* 14. 29. who being sent for by *Absolon*, once and againe, yet refused to goe; but when *Absolon* set fire on his fieldes of Corne, then *Ioab* arose and went to the house of *Absolon*: So the Lord inuites vs to repentance, not once but often by the mouth of his Ministers, by the knocke of his Spirit, by the charme of his mercies; and if wee neglect these blessed Calles and Summons, as *Ioab* did the inuitement of *Absolon*, the Lord hee will then set fire vpon our Corne fieldes, hee will make the Heauens as brasse, that they shall deny vs their deawe, or else the land shall surfet with a surplage of Showers, and bring foorth nothing but crude and rawe fruites, as of late this Kingdome hath had a share in this Iudgement; and all to awake vs out of the slumber of our crueltie, vncleannesse, with other our wickednesse, that so wee may a-

rise and seeke him while hee may bee found, lest hee being not opened to, while he knocks at the doore of our hearts, by the hammer of his Iudgements, he depart and leaue vs to a reprobate sense, so shall our last end bee worse then our beginning.

4

Fourthly, the Lord doth thus plunge vs, that hee may trie our faith and patience, kinde our prayers, and prouoke vs to the practise of all holy duties: for what graces soeuer lye hidd in the soules of his Saints, in the Summer of their *Prosperitie*, will breake foorth and shewe themselues in the Winter of *Aduersitie*: That faith which was faint in their dayes of wealth and peace, will grow strong in the houre of tryall and trouble, not parting with GOD, no more then *Iacob* would doe with the *Angell*, vntill the Lord haue graciously answered the wishes and desires of their hearts; that prayer which was weake while the world smiled vpon them, come once but trouble, it will grow strong, like the Sunne in the Firmament, when hee comes to his Verticall, or Noone poynt. Indeed our Prayers they bee most potent with God, when wee begin to fall off from the world, and decline from the height of sinne. The *Romane* Captaine *Scipio* by name, would say of his Souldiers, that their estate stood in the worst tearmes, when they had the most peace.

peace. Want of exercise maketh both body and soule rustie. And Saint *Ierome* well obserueth, that *Salomon* fell so foule, because hee liued in delights; for prosperitie is the Step-mother of all holy vertues; the Starres shewe brightest in the darkest night; sweete Spices smell most pleasantly, when they are crusht and pounded; and Christian vertues are most apparant vnder the Crosse: *Therefore wee reioyce in tribulation*, saith the Apostle, *Rom. 5. 3. 4.*

Fifthly, the Lord does thus afflict vs for a double subordinate end: *First*, to testifie the respectiue care that he hath of his owne glory. *Secondly*, to manifest his prouidence and care ouer vs.

His owne glory is preserved when he frees vs out of hopelesse dangers, out of such dangers, as all the Arte, skill, and power of man is able to doe nothing at; witnesse the deliuerance of his *Israel* at the *Red Sea*, who being *inter mare & hostes, inter gladios & undas*, hauing the Sea before them, their enemies behind them; the sword pursuing them, the waues affronting them, the mountaines on both sides enclosing them, and in the eye of flesh, without all meanes or hope of helpe, yet see, saith *Philo Iudens*, that *vbi desinit humanum auxilium, ibi incipit Diuinum*: That euen when men be most in misery, that then

is Gods fittest time to shew his mercy that euen *then* the Lord diuides the Sea, making a Lane, or passage for his people to walk in, and so preserues them, shewing that hee is our hope beyond hope, and a present remedie in needfull time of trouble, manifesting his strength in our weakenesse, and his infinitie in our infirmity.

2

Secondly, the Lord doth thus straight vs, to manifest his care ouer vs, and therefore is it, that in our present wants hee doth raise vs friends to bestead vs, at whose hands we haue demerited no such bounty, or of whom wee haue expected no such courtesie; or else by sending some Rauens miraculously to releue and feed vs, as hee did the Prophet *Eliab*: 1. *Kings* 17, 4, 9. and all to shew his mighty protection and prouidence ouer vs, which neuer more shewes it selfe, then when his people bee in greatest straites, and strangest exigents.

6

Lastly, the Lord doth thus afflict vs, least when wee heare of *Eliabs* persecutions, or *Iobs* distresses, or other of the Saints calamities, wee should account them to bee but fables; therefore he brings vpon (*Vs*) daies of mourning and nights of sorrow, that we may haue experience in our selues of their sufferings; & to this purpose Saint *Gregory* speaks fitly, *Dens electis iter asperum facit in via, ne obliui-*

obliscantur eorum, qui sunt patria, the Lord
 pauses our way with thornes, lest wee should
 suppose our forefathers walked vpon pil-
 lowes. To conclude, seeing there is in the
 Crosse *occulta qualitates*, hidden vertues,
 powerfull for the curing of our loue infir-
 mities; *Let vs therefore submit our selues vnto*
Gods hand, as Saint Peter doth aduise vs in his
 first Epistle, Chap. 5. v. 6. *Dauid* of his owne
 experience doth acknowledge a *Soueraigne*
 benefit therein, when he said, *It is good for mee*
that I was afflicted, for thereby haue I lear-
 ned to keepe thy Commandements; and an
 ancient Writer glossing vpon these words,
 tells vs that there is in the Crosse a double
 vertue, *ὑγιαίνουσα ἐξουσία καὶ σωτηρία ἐκ τῆς θανάτου*,
 a preservative power and a sauative power:
 The *Preservative power* is like *Ionas Whale*,
 which although it seemed to swallow vp and
 deuoure him; yet the *Whale* was the meanes
 of his life and safety; so the Crosse although
 it make shew to crush and curse vs, yet there-
 by are wee blessed; *Blessed is the man that is*
corrected. *Iob. 5. 17.* And as for the *Sauative*
power, it is like the Poole of *Bethesda*, which
 did not heale vnlesse it were stirred and moued
 by the Angel: So except we be rack't of the
 lees of sinne, by some sharpe handling of vs,
 our hearts will grow so hard, that it is vnpos-
 sible wee should take out the lesson of Repen-
 D tance,

tance, motion is a steppes to dissolution; exercise of the body, rarefies and thinnes the bloud, as also cheeres the spirits. So trialls and temptations, make the affections more spirituall, and our hearts lesse earthly minded, *I therefore thinks it not strange* (saith Saint Peter) in his 1. Epist. at the 13. vers. of his 4. Chap. *for the fiery troubles which light upon you;* and a fitter word could not haue beene deuised, then to resemble them to *Fier*.

1 *Fier*, is of a light ascending nature; so afflictions, make vs spirituall minded, and ascend by holy afflictions, and diuine meditations into *Sions Mountaine the Church Triumphant*, which like a hill is exalted aboue the *Church Militant*.

2 *Fier*, is of a hot and heating nature; So afflictions make vs hot suitors for reliefe, impatient of the Lords delaying vs, giuing him no rest, nor our selues any ease, vntill he grant and wee enioy whatsoeuer wee shall become suitors to him for.

3 *Fier*, shineth and giueth light; So trouble openeth the eyes, *Schola Crucis, schola Lucis*, saith Saint Bernard; and Manasses who forgot the Lord while he was at liberty in his pallace, could pray vnto him when hee was in prison, and humble himselfe greatly; *And Manasses being in tribulations, called vpon the God of his Fathers, 2. Chr. 33. 10.*

4 *Fier*,

4 *Fier*, someth the hardest iron : So there is no heart so stony, but it will yeeld and melt with tribulations, euen *Pharao* the cruell will yeeld for a time, while he and his people bee vnder the ten plagues, though after hee turne *Apostata*, fall off, and aske, *who is the Lord, that hee should let the people goe*, Exod. 8. vers. 9.

5 *Fier*, workes according to his obiekt; it burnisheth gold, but it annihilats drosse; it melts waxe, but it hardens clay; so the godly and the godlesse are both sufferers, but in this *similitudine passionum*, there is *dissimilitudo patientium*, though they bee both burdened alike, yet they differ in their carriage: The wicked in their sufferings, they murmur against the Lord; and seeke to helpe themselves by the deuills Emissaries, his Witches, and Wizards; whereas the godly are patiently obedient, remembring their Masters Motto, *Father not my will, but thy will be done*, and if it please thee, let this bitter cup of imprisonment, and other distresses passe from mee, yet not my will, but thy will bee done, *Therefore let vs reioyce though now for a season we be in heauinesse*, 1. Pet. 1. 6, 7.

The Inferences follow. First, wee are put in minde, to bee Christianly conceited of all those whom wee see to be exercised with this angry and smyting hand of the Lord, as also

to comfort our selues if the same be laid vpon vs, not conceiuing that either they or wee be out of Gods fauour; for *misericordia tua, Domine, super omnia iniquitatem meam*, that is, although the rod be sharpe, yet the hand that smites is sweet and full of refreshment; therefore suffer afflictions, and say with the holy man *Iob*, *Though the Lord kill me, yet still will I put my trust in him.*

Secondly, seeing reformation, the renewing of repentance, the examination of our spirituall estate, a breaking off from all our personal and predominant finnes, which haue prouoked the Lord to deale thus roughly with vs, should be the vse that we are to make of our corrections and afflictions; hence many Christians are iustly taxed, who are so far from profiting thereby, that instead of shaking hands, and bidding adieu to sinne and sinfull courses, that they fold their hands like *Salomons* Sluggard, and make new leagues with iniquitie; And whereas before, they were but bunglers and dullards in acting of sinne, O, now they are Masters of the sinning Arte, as we haue wofull experience in all the Prisons of the Kingdome, into which many Prisoners at their first entrance haue been ciuilly demeaned, but within a small continuance after, I cannot expresse how they haue been Metamorphosed, and growne more stupid then *Cyparissus*, and altogether vn sensible of

of that diuine stroke which was vpon them, by giuing themselves ouer to all vncleannesse and intemperance, the high road way to hell. It is recorded in the second of the *Chron.* 28. 22. that *Ahaz* is noted for a speciall Monster, because in the time of his tribulation, hee did trespasse more and more; *This is Ahaz*, sayth the Text, which is a remarkeable Item of his grosse sinning : So these are monsters in religion, who follow their sinfull Byas, when the Lord is dealing with them, to breake off their sinnes. For when the hand of the Lord is vpon vs, it should span, and weane vs from our sinfull courses, and abridge vs of our former pleasures and delights, making vs Votaries to his worship and seruice, and for euer obseruant of his Lawes and Edicts, not turning away like a stubburne generation, nor starting aside like a broken Bowe.

The third, is made to our hands in the second of *Sam.* 15. 25, 26, &c. where *Dauid* being pursued by *Absalon*, and in danger of no lesse then the losse of his Kingdome, flies to God, and thus vnfoldes himselfe, O Lord, if I shall finde fauour with thee, restore mee; if not, heere I am, doe with mee as it seemeth good in thy sight. Beloued, wee are persecuted by our cruell and mercilesse Creditours, and heere immured, deprived, not of a Kingdome I confesse, but of our Lands,

Livings, Liberties: Let *Dauids* patterne
 bee our practise, and let vs all ioyne in one,
 and say, *O God, if wee haue found fauour in*
thy sight, number the dayes of our trouble,
enlarge vs, restore vs to our former ha-
bitations; if not, heere wee are,
dispose of vs as it seemes
good in thy sight.

FINIS.

4 AP 65

